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SOURCE OF THE EVIL:

OR, THE

SYSTEM DISPLAYED.

ADDRESSED TO THE

GENTRY, YEOMANRY, FREEHOLDERS, AND ELECTORS

OF

ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

BY A FREEHOLDER. R

IN FOUR LETTERS.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY P. BYRNE, No. 35, COLLEGE-GREEN.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

[PRICE ONE BRITISH SHILLING.]

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ADDRESSED TO THE

GENERAL FARMERS, BREEDERS, AND SELECTORS



ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

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DUBLIN:

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LETTER I.

Friends and Countrymen,

THE subject of this address is, next to what you owe to God, of the greatest importance to yourselves, and to your children. Every thing you value as Englishmen is at this moment at stake. An experiment is trying upon you, on the event of which it must depend whether you shall continue to be the free and happy people, the virtue of your forefathers, and the favour of Providence, made you; or whether you shall follow the example of other nations around you, and relinquish the rights and privileges which have so long distinguished you from the rest of Europe.

They, who are trying this experiment upon you, treat you with a degree of cruelty worthy of the attempt in which they have engaged. Not contented with having conspired against your freedom, they leave nothing untried to prevail on you to take a share in the conspiracy. They practise every art, and employ every argument, to render you civil suicides, and to stir you up to such a height of infatuation, as to be aiding and abetting in your own ruin. They are trampling upon all your dearest rights, and with the utmost wantonness of barbarity, they are labouring to trample on them, not only with your own approbation, but by your own express desire.

The arts they make use of in the progress of this attempt, are the same which the history of e-

very free nation, that has been stripped of its liberties, point out to them as the most likely to insure success—To wean you from your friends; to make you jealous and mistrustful of every man, who embraces your interests, or in whom you have at any time placed your confidence; to induce you to throw yourselves under the protection of your disguised enemies, and become like the sheep in the fable, which suffered themselves to be persuaded that the dogs, their trusty guardians, had betrayed them, and that the wolves were their best friends, and so became an easy prey, and were devoured by their deceivers.

The industry with which they practise these Arts, it is not necessary to point out to you. Their agents are employed night and day in spreading their misrepresentations through every quarter of the country, and canvassing for addresses, wherever they are certain those misrepresentations can best escape detection. The lye of their emissaries in the city is echoed through every town and corporation in the kingdom, and, as is the nature of all lyes, the further it goes from its source, the more it assumes the appearance of truth, and the more credit it gains.

The design, therefore, of these Letters, is to counteract the fatal consequences which misconception on your parts, and an ignorance of the real state of the question, which now fills every honest man with fears and alarms, might produce. I beseech you then, to listen to the truth, while you can profit by it; you may open your eyes to it when it is too late. A series of *facts*, and such observations as naturally arise from them, is what I mean to lay before you—I am one of yourselves, and can have no interest in your being deceived.

The Real Questions to be proposed to you for your deliberation, are,

1. Are you willing and desirous, that the rules and maxims of arbitrary governments, in the appointment of the Ministers of the Crown, shall be adopted and put in practice, in the place of those which have prevailed since the Revolution, and which agree with the spirit of the Constitution, as settled at that period?

2. Are you willing to resign that controul over those Ministers, which is your inherent right, and the pledge of your freedom, and to release them from the responsibility which they owe to your Representatives for all their measures?

3. Are you prepared to see the House of Commons, in which you sit by your Representatives, become a mere office to register the arbitrary mandates of the Court, preserved for mere form, and deprived of every means, either of advice or controul, to secure you against the attempts of encroaching despotism?

4. Are you prepared to relinquish the active share you have enjoyed through your Representatives in the Legislature of your Country, and to transfer the Government from King, Lords, and Commons, to King and Lords only?

Whatever you have been told to the contrary, or by whatever misrepresentations you may have been deceived and misled, this, I will prove to you, to be the real state of the present struggle between the Ministers of the Crown and you. But, before I proceed to consider and discuss it with you, it will be essential to take a pretty wide field, that you may discover the steps by which you have been led into your present situation. Before you can hope to remedy any great evil, you must first know its extent, and the causes of it. I beseech you, therefore, to read what follows impartially, and
with

with an attention becoming a subject of such infinite importance to yourselves.

From the Revolution to the beginning of the present reign, the nation enjoyed, I may say uninterruptedly, the blessings secured to us at that glorious period. The different boundaries established by the Constitution as then declared and ascertained, were, during that period of near eighty years, held sacred and inviolate. Disputes and divisions still existed, it is true, in our national Councils; but they were entirely confined to matters of foreign policy, or domestic regulations—to such objects as claimed the attention of the fixed and established government of a great nation, daily advancing into power, wealth, and consequence.

The party distinctions which subsisted during the life of King William, our great deliverer, from the refractory spirit of the Nonjurors, or the violence of the few Tories, who stood up for the divine right of Kings, and the feeble attempts, under the subsequent reigns, to alter the succession, scarce deserve to be considered as exceptions. They were raised and fomented by a monstrous faction among the people themselves; a faction, which, in violation of every principle and feeling of nature, rebelled for slavery;—a faction, that preferred despotism, and all its attendant horrors, to the mildest and most popular government, and the freedom it secured.

In the latter years of Queen Anne, a design was indeed formed to destroy our Constitution by the Restoration of the House of Stuart to the Throne of these Realms: but this design was effectually defeated by the spirit and persevering exertions of the Whigs and constitutional Tories of those days; and the settlement of the succession in the illustrious House of Hanover, destroyed all the hopes of the slavish abettors of arbitrary government.

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Nothing could be more favourable to the establishment of your liberties, than the character of the *good* King, who, the first of that line, was called to the Throne, in consequence of the Act of Succession. Joined to his natural love for justice and equity, which led him to favour and protect the general rights of mankind, the recent impressions of gratitude on a heart so distinguished for honesty, integrity, candour, and purity of principles, as that of George the First, could not fail of rendering him particularly tender of the liberties of a generous people, to whom he was indebted for the exalted station to which he had been raised. During the whole of his reign he manifested the warmest affection for the constitution which he was chosen to cement, the highest attachment and predilection for those who were known to be friends to it. This attachment, this predilection, were fully returned by his subjects. He reigned in their hearts and affections, and they effectually supported him against all the attempts of the pretenders to his Throne.

The *great* Prince who succeeded him was no less distinguished for his care to preserve inviolate, and in their fullest extent, the liberties of a nation which had placed all its confidence in the virtues of his family. Failings and foibles he certainly had, but they were the foibles and failings of a great and good mind. Warm and passionate in his temper, if he was at times not unblameable in his conduct, he was ever right in his intentions. No disguises, no dissimulation entered into his character, no hypocrisy. His resentments were open and manly; his reconciliations sincere and unreserved. His attachment to those, who he had reason to be convinced, were the best friends to the liberties of the people, and consequently to his family, suffered some short interruptions, but he

he always returned to them with cordiality and affection; and the utmost confidence and most unreserved intercourse subsisted at all times between him and your branch of the Legislature; because he knew that in that branch the spirit of the constitution chiefly resided, and that from its principles and exertions the emancipation of the country that adopted him, and the exaltation of his family had chiefly originated. He lived revered and beloved by his subjects; happy in himself because he made his people happy, and an instrument in the hands of providence to raise the glory, the power, and the commerce of this country, to a height scarcely paralleled in the annals of mankind!

The affliction into which the nation was plunged at his death was general and sincere, such as his virtues deserved; but the hopes that were entertained of his successor were as general, and made us less sensible of the loss we had sustained. The first of his illustrious House who had received his birth among us, with what happy forebodings did we hear his present Majesty pride himself on that circumstance, as promising to strengthen the ties that bound his family to this nation! His youth, the successes of his arms in every quarter of the globe, the total suppression of all his domestic enemies, and the extinction of the Pretenders to his Throne, gave us every reason to look forward to a long and prosperous reign. We promised ourselves, that under his auspices and those circumstances, (favourable beyond what his predecessors of his own line could have enjoyed,) the spirit of the Constitution, among other blessings, would be so uniformly countenanced, cherished, and brought into action, that every remembrance would be obliterated of there having ever existed a party amongst us, who had conspired for its ruin.

Had the virtues of our Sovereign been suffered to operate from their own bias, we should not have

have fallen from those flattering hopes. But, in a very short time, the adoption of a system of policy, totally repugnant in all its parts to the maxims of the two preceding reigns, became but too manifest, and filled the public with jealousies and alarms. It is of little consequence to you, at this moment, to search for the real source, from which this destructive system originally flowed. From some recent circumstances, it is more than probable that the person who has been loaded with all the odium of the invention, was himself but an instrument in the hand of others to carry it into effect. Whether the author of it has paid the debt to nature, and has consigned the management of it to a * more subordinate agent than the nobleman here alluded to, or lives to rejoice in the present prospect of its success, is a discovery which I am willing to leave to posterity. The melancholy fact to which I must call your attention is, that from the day that Mr. Pitt, the father, was first dismissed, to make way for the Earl of Bute, to the dismissal of the Duke of Portland to make way for Mr. Pitt, the son, the secret abettors of that pernicious system have been labouring to establish their power on the ruins of every maxim of constitutional Government, with unabating industry, though with various success. The first victim of their fatal policy was Mr. Pitt, the late Earl of Chatham.—Little could they then foresee, that they should one day find its most declared and successful champion in the person of his son.

Instead of beginning, by a definition of this system, and describing it in words, I shall trace it in its progress and effects, as the best means of giving you a complete knowledge of it in all its parts and tendencies, and this I shall do as briefly as the

* Mr. C——s J——n.

nformation which I think necessary to convey to you will admit.

To a *Coalition* that had been formed at the end of the last reign, between the Duke of Newcastle, and Mr. Pitt, the nation had been indebted for those brilliant successes that then attended our arms in every part of the world. Great and deserved popularity, superior talents, extensive and powerful connexions in the country, formed the ground and support of their Administration. These, indeed, were the requisites which had recommended every Administration, during the two preceding reigns. As the dignity of the Sovereign, and the power and consequence of the people, were then considered to be inseparable and dependent upon each other, those great and popular characters were esteemed both by Sovereign and People, as the best securities for their respective interests. To the good opinion of the people, and to the reliance placed in their integrity by their fellow subjects, they were solely indebted for the power with which they were intrusted by the Prince. This, to the People, was at once a proof of their own importance and the pledge of their safety; and as it argued in the Sovereign a paternal condescension to the opinions, and an attention to the wishes of his subjects, it formed a new tie that bound them to his person. Hence the fruits the Crown reaped from it were, affection and attachment, boundless confidence, cheerful and zealous support—the only source of real happiness to a British King—the only foundation to him of substantial power and solid dignity. But the Cabal which had been formed in the privacy and secret recesses of the Royal Chambers, infused far different ideas of power and dignity. Comparing the situation of the Sovereign of these kingdoms with that of the Sovereign Princes his neighbours, they represented the system

tem of our mixed monarchy, such as I have described it, as little less than Royal servitude, as a degradation of the Throne, and a humiliating delegation of its powers into the hands of its own servants.—The circumstances of the times appeared to them to authorize the monarch to emancipate himself from this divided rule. They incited him to shew, that he no longer held a precarious sceptre, disputable by rivals, or requiring the support of the great interests which first placed it in his hands—In the appointment of his *own servants*, no recommendation should be pleaded but his own choice, no support required but his personal favour—It was an undoubted prerogative to name his Ministers, and the only account he had to give to his Parliament or his People, in justification of his nomination, was his Royal Pleasure.

Favourable, however, as the circumstances were, which seemed to open a way to the accomplishment of those designs, they could not warrant an immediate and open avowal of them. The Cabal, therefore determined to proceed covertly and gradually. Their first step was to break that *Coalition*, which owed its formation to a principle the most destructive of their system.

It was the misfortune of those times, that the same cordiality and agreement in opinions on the state of public affairs, which distinguishes a *Coalition*, of which you now hear so much abuse, and which is infinitely more formidable and hateful in the eyes of the Cabal than any ever formed, did not subsist between Mr. Pitt and the friends of the Duke of Newcastle. The secret advisers of the Crown availed themselves of this circumstance to practice a favourite maxim, on which they principally depend for success. They divided, that they might first weaken, and then destroy their

opposers. Personal prejudices contributed greatly to the success of this attempt. Mr. Pitt found himself compelled to resign, though his Colleagues remained in office. But these soon discovered that they had only been assisting in their own ruin. The downfall of Mr. Pitt was but a preparatory step to their own.

I need not recall to your minds the violence to which the Cabal was encouraged to proceed on the dismissal of the Duke of Newcastle, or the general sweep that was made through every office and department of the State, in order to shew the People that they could find no protection from the old established interests of the country, and that a new source was opened of preferment and favour. I need not remind you of the ferment, which a combination of public grievances, under this first Secret Influence Administration, raised both in Parliament, and throughout the empire. This ferment was such as checked the Cabal in their violent career. They were compelled to pay a seeming deference to the public opinion; and the Earl of Bute, against whom it is more than probable the public odium had been industriously directed, was removed from his office.

This sacrifice of the first instrument, employed by the Cabal, in prosecuting their scheme, produced no advantage to the public. Though Lord Bute was removed from power, still it remained in the hands of an Administration, constituted in the most exact conformity to the new system, and to the wishes of its friends; an Administration, as unsupported by great and extensive connections abroad, as by great Parliamentary influence, or Parliamentary abilities; possessing no ground of power in themselves, and consequently subservient to the will of the Court, and dependent on its favour; composed of discordant principles and jarring

jaring interests, and therefore open to dissensions and divisions, of which the Cabal might avail itself, either to defeat the measures it disapproved, or to get rid of the refractory Members.

Such, in fact, was the Grenville Administration.—Distracted among themselves, and contemptible in the eyes of the nation, they dragged on a crazed and rickety existence, until the indignation, excited by the General Warrants, and the commotions in America, of which they sowed the first seeds, drove them from office, and effectually suspended for some time the designs of their secret employers.

To the Grenville Administration, succeeded that of Lord Rockingham. Under that virtuous Nobleman, the nation was blessed with a restoration of its Constitutional Government. The exigencies of the times required stronger hands to redress them than the feeble system of Favouritism and Court Intrigue could command. The popular storm was raised, and none but those who possessed the popular confidence could hope to allay it.

It is essential to the object of this address, that I should remind you of a circumstance which happened at this period, and which is in itself a matter of curious recollection. I have already observed to you, that Mr. Pitt was the first victim which the Cabal determined to sacrifice to their system. Smarting under the immediate feelings of the treatment he had received at their hands, he was naturally suspicious of those, who from their places, might be supposed to have some share in their confidence. This suspicion glanced even at the characters who composed the Administration of Lord Rockingham; and he took occasion to express that suspicion in a debate, on an Address to the Throne on the state of America. His words are too remarkable not to transcribe them. “As to
“the

“ the present Gentlemen,” said he, “ I have no
 “ objection to them. I have never been made a
 “ sacrifice by any of them. Their characters are
 “ fair, and I am always glad when men of fair
 “ character engage in his Majesty’s service. But
 “ by comparing events with each other, and rea-
 “ soning from effects to causes, methinks I plain-
 “ ly discover traces of an *over ruling influence*.
 “ There is a clause in the act of settlement, to
 “ oblige every Minister to sign his name to the
 “ advice which he gives his Sovereign. Would
 “ it were observed. I have had the honour to
 “ serve the Crown, and if I would have submitted,
 “ I might have still continued to serve it; *but I*
 “ *would not be responsible for others.*”

A very short time convinced that great States-
 man, and the nation at large, that his suspicions,
 as far as they affected the Ministry, were ground-
 less. But the fact to which he alluded, and the per-
 tinacious exertions of that restless influence, by
 which he declared he had been driven from the
 Cabinet, were proved beyond the possibility of a
 doubt, by the very circumstance that confuted his
 suspicions. Lord Rockingham did, indeed, feel
 that influence; but he felt it operating against
 him. He had the crying sin of popularity to atone
 for, as Mr. Pitt had had; he had the additional
 sin of extensive connexions, and of the support
 of a great national party. Mr. Pitt fell a single
 victim; here was a whole hecatomb to be immo-
 lated on the altar of Secret Influence. In a division
 on the great and leading measure of his Admini-
 stration, Lord Rockingham found the whole body
 of Pensioners and Household Troops marshalled
 against him. All whom their situation in the Army,
 in the Public Offices, in the Bedchamber, made
 immediately subservient to the Court, and depen-
 dent on its favours, and at the head of them a per-
 son,

son, then Auditor General of Accounts to the Princess Dowager of Wales, and who has since been emboldened to avow himself the secret adviser of the Crown*. Lord Rockingham triumphed over them in that instance, it is true; but his victory served only to accelerate the fall of his Administration.

Then was set, for the first time, that example which has been followed, within these few weeks, with increased audacity, and with the most fatal success. The only difference is, that the effects were then as invisible as they are now, but the instruments employed in accomplishing them were as carefully concealed, as they are now ostentatiously avowed and defended. Then was first publicly seen the Crown in opposition to a Minister, who had reason to believe he possessed its confidence; then for the first time was the personal influence of the Sovereign openly exerted in defeating a measure which had been previously approved by him in his closet. Then, for the first time, were the plans of the responsible Cabinet counteracted by a Back Stairs whisper, and the black and gloomy spirit of Secret Intrigue. The attempt, as I have observed, failed of success. The approbation of the measure was acknowledged; the interference was disavowed—all open opposition ceased, and the nation reaped the most happy fruits, even from this temporary defeat of the Cabal. The disturbances in America were quieted. The abuses of General Warrants were reprobated by an act of Parliament; the minds of men on that point were set at ease, and the freedom and peace of the subject secured—The odious Cyder Tax was repealed. But under this appear-

* Mr. C——s J——n.

ance of a cessation of hostilities on the part of the Cabal, they were busily employed in undermining the power which they found they could not openly destroy. Checked, but not defeated, they were preparing for a more favourable opportunity, and the very success of their opposers soon held it out to them, in the restoration of public tranquility, and the removal of the necessity which had forced Lord Rockingham into office.

In accomplishing this sudden revolution in its own favour, the Cabal secured a double advantage. They trampled over a popular Administration by the removal of Lord Rockingham; and by the immediate appointment of Mr. Pitt, who then became Lord Chatham, and received the reward of a pension, they laid a snare for a popular character to lessen his influence, and injure his name in the public estimation.

Among all the measures the most eagerly adopted, and the most zealously pursued by the Cabal, this is that on which they build their best hopes — To bring all characters, founded upon public principles, upon a level; to confound every distinction between public integrity and public prostitution; to establish an opinion that every man finds a price, either in ambition or avarice, for which to barter his services, and that a regard for the general welfare is but a cloak for personal and selfish views, has been uniformly the object of their most earnest exertions. By this they hope to alienate the people from those who court their favour, to prejudice them against their natural defenders to whom they were accustomed to look for their security, gradually to habituate them to direct their attention to the Throne alone, where, it is insinuated, the general desertion centers.

In

In the prosecution of this favourite scheme—a scheme that saps the foundation of all popular government, and is the very spirit and life of perfect despotism—they hold out rewards, honours, and offices, in proportion to the rank and consequence of the person they mean to gain. Where these fail, and where the spirit of freedom spurns at the base hand that would bribe it from its duty and principles, every vile artifice is employed to misrepresent and traduce them to the people. The most gross falsehoods are propagated to mislead the uninformed. Mercenary emissaries are employed in every circle to slander the virtues which they cannot corrupt. In the credulity of the public they unfortunately find too much encouragement to pursue those designs, and to that credulity you may in a great measure ascribe the misfortunes of the present day.

It is a melancholy reflection, and yet it is founded on facts, that the chief instrument employed by them in forwarding this part of their system for several years, was that great Statesman to whom this nation is so much indebted for her past prosperity and grandeur. That Lord Chatham did not see the snare that was laid for him, was as manifest as was the success with which their design was crowned.—Whether he hoped that in his own integrity, in his transcendent abilities, in the adulatory deference paid to him by those who entered into office with him, and in the popularity of his character, he should find an effectual support against that influence which he had so lately confessed he had felt, and was compelled to yield to, or by whatever motives his conduct was directed, certain it is, that on many occasions, and particularly by lending his assistance in subverting the popular Admini-

stration of Lord Rockingham, he suffered considerably in your estimation. From that moment he gradually sunk in his credit with the nation. The doctrine of the dispensing power, and the other unconstitutional measures to which he gave the sanction of his name by continuing to hold his seat in a Cabinet that had been originally formed on his credit and through his means, served to alienate his warmest admirers.

No one will now suspect that his conduct at that period was meant as a sacrifice of his principles to the views of the Cabal. Even if it had been so meant, it would not have been accepted by them. Fallen, though he was, in the public opinion, and broken down by infirmities, still his spirit was too high and untameable to mingle with theirs. He was, therefore, finally dismissed by them. The only atonement he could make to his country for the assistance he had given in forwarding their views, was once more to warn it against them; to declare, as he did from his seat in the House of Lords, that he had again met behind the Throne that overruling influence which had before removed him, and which, mistaking the chief mover in it, he asserted was greater than Majesty itself.

After having made all the use of Lord Chatham's name, which they had proposed to themselves, and seized a convenient opportunity for getting rid of so dangerous and precarious an instrument, the Cabal proceeded with larger strides in the accomplishment of their system. Hitherto they had only tried their experiments, in raising and pulling down Administrations. The success of those experiments, and the divisions they had caused by them among the different interests, from each of which they had procured and retained
considerable

considerable desertions, encouraged them to raise their views to Parliament, and the Middlesex election soon gave them an opportunity of trying their arts there.

I need not recall to your minds the circumstances of that attempt, or the shameful resolutions with which the Cabal procured, that the Journals of the House of Commons should be stained:—Resolutions that continued to establish a precedent which affected the very source of your power and consequence from that day, until Lord Rockingham's last Administration, among other measures to secure the freedom of election, caused them to be erased with the ignomy they merited.—The object of the Cabal was the same which they are now pursuing—to separate Parliament and People—to bring the Representative Body into contempt with its Constituents, and by disgusting them against its conduct, make them less anxious for its existence. The means were, indeed, different, and the pretences even contrary to those on which they now proceed; but the end was the same. They then affected to support the Parliament against the People; they now affect to support the People against the Parliament. They were then trepanning the Parliament into a surrender of its Rights; they are now cajoling the People into a surrender of their rights. In that instance, they braved and despised the popular opinions, and treated the addresses of the people with the utmost contumely; in the present they are begging, in the name of Royalty through every town and corporation, to procure those addresses, and the popular opinions they affect to consider as their best support.—In both instances, the only aim was, and is, to destroy the power of Parliament and People. Indeed, these are but

different words to express the same thing. In the spirit of the Constitution, Parliament is the People.

A FREEHOLDER.

L E T T E R II.

Friends and Countrymen,

THE experiment made by the secret advisers of the Crown, in the Middlesex election, was in part attended with success. They established their precedent, the rest was to be left to time. They had brought the constitution of Parliament, and the mode of election, within the verge of their influence. *You* might in time submit to have occasional representatives appointed for you by the Crown, as it is now maintained by the advocates of the present Ministry, that you have *hereditary representatives* of its nomination.

Had their next attempt proved equally successful, the system would have been completed—I should not now have an opportunity of encouraging you to preserve your rights; you would have no rights to preserve. Providence interfered in your deliverance. The British spirit still flourished unbroken and unimpaired in the American provinces. They disdained to yield to an usurpation unknown to the Constitution of their ancestors, or to brook encroachments on their rights, against which those ancestors had risen in arms. They resisted; and to that resistance, however you may have suffered in a diminution of wealth, commerce, and external consequence,
you

you are indebted for all the liberty that is yet left you.

It is not necessary that I should enter into any detail of the circumstances of that fatal contest. My purpose is, to trace the steps of the Cabal in regular progression through all the transactions of the present reign. To answer this purpose, it will be sufficient to direct your attention to the immediate object for which they engaged in the American war. That object was to levy contributions on the subject without his consent; to separate the idea of Taxation and Representation; to establish the former on the manner of all arbitrary governments, and enforce it as a debt due for *protection*; to alter the ancient Constitution of each Province, and arbitrarily to substitute new forms of Government without their consent, and to which they were to be compelled to yield implicit obedience.

The Cabal justly conceived it to be a very fortunate circumstance in their favour, that the experiment could be made on the extremities of the empire; on what was considered rather as dependencies, than as parts incorporated with ourselves. Success would furnish them with the means of improving their experiment. The minds of men would become habituated to the doctrine. America would furnish inexhaustible resources of influence from the numberless tribe of Placemen and Taxgatherers; and a standing army would be necessary to enforce that *unconditional submission* to which she was to be reduced.

These were the happy and prosperous days of the Cabal. The Parliament, the Nation, the ostensible Minister, all blindly lent them aid in promoting their designs. The prospect of making America bear her part in the public burdens, and of seeing this country relieved, by her means,
from

from the load of taxes under which we groaned, produced an universal frenzy. In the pursuit of this idle and visionary hope, the nation became incapable of listening to any other consideration; the voice of the few who opposed it was drowned in the general clamour.

I said that the ostensible Minister of the day was hurried away in the stream. He felt no rubs from that influence of which his predecessors had so uniformly complained. With that openness and candour that have entitled him to the thanks of the independent characters of this country, he has himself assigned the reason. He felt it not, he said, because he supposed he was acting as it wished him to act. He was promoting its interest, while he aimed at promoting the interest of the nation.

The power and influence he had acquired, beyond what any other Minister had ever enjoyed, he then ascribed to the confidence of his Sovereign, and to the sense entertained of his services. He has lived to be undeceived. The moment his Administration ceased to be instrumental in promoting the views of the Cabal, he drew the whole weight of their indignation upon him. The moment they found that he had established a firm interest in his country; the moment they saw him followed in Parliameat by a considerable body of men, independent of the Court, and not to be detached from him, from that moment Lord North became more objectionable, more hateful in their sight than the most violent of all their opposers. Even the man whom they before *execrated*, is preferred to him; and of all the members of the late Cabinet, he is the only one to whom they publicly object.

Losses and defeats had opened your eyes to the fatal consequences of the American war. The object for which it had been so eagerly undertaken had vanished into smoke. The nation, instead of being eased of its burden by it, was oppressed with an additional weight of taxes, which threatened a general bankruptcy. The tide of popular clamour was turned against the supporters of the war, and the discontents without doors, made their way into Parliament. The fears of the independent Gentlemen, and of those who had a stake in their country, became too powerful to be resisted by those who thrived by the public ruin, and who owed their seats in the House to the profits of the war. The Cabal saw the danger that threatened them from the defeat of their favourite measure, which had promised so very different an issue. Their exertions to ward off the blow, were proportioned to the consequences they dreaded from it. It was like parting with life. But Parliament, true, in this instance, to your wishes, was resolute. It carried its Remonstrances to the Throne, and they who stood behind it had not *then* a Minister of such temper and principles as they have now brought forward and adopted. Lord North, against whom so many artifices are employed to prejudice and inflame you, disdained to act the part, which Mr. Pitt, whom you are directed to reverence, is at this moment acting. He had prosecuted the American war, and continued in Administration, because he had been encouraged to prosecute the one, and continue in the other, by a decided majority of your Representatives. The instant that same majority appeared as decided in their condemnation, he put an end to his Administration, as a measure which he knew would of course put an end to the war.

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The threats and soothings, the denunciations of lasting resentment, or the promises of boundless and eternal confidence which were conveyed to him by the agents of the Cabal, could not shake his resolution! They were not able to prevail on him to hold a station which he could not retain without violating every maxim of constitutional government. He chose to expose himself to the vengeance of the Court, whose implacability he foresaw, and to the resentment of that powerful body of men, whom long rooted prejudices, and the sense of the national distresses which were attributed to him as their sole author, had inflamed against him, rather than lend himself to the support of an Administration in which the Representatives of the People of England declared they had no confidence. His measures had proved unfortunate, but he was conscious to himself that his intentions had ever been right. He had failed in promoting the successes of his country; he was incapable of lending his assistance to the subversion of his Constitution. The one might be recovered—the other, once materially injured, could not be restored without a dangerous convulsion in the State. The same noble disinterestedness which within these few days induced him to relinquish every prospect of *returning* to office, rather than oppose the general wish of restoring peace and quiet to this distracted country, induced him then to *retire from* office, when he thought that by *retiring* he could allay the public fears. This will be his praise, when the ingratitude of men whom he enriched by his favours, when the clamour of faction in which these men are the loudest and most eager to join, when the virulence of the present obstinate retainers of that power which he

he nobly disdains, will be despised and forgotten. His most inveterate enemies, witnesses of this patriotic conduct, have already done him justice. He will receive, I make no doubt, equal justice from you.

No sooner had Lord North withdrawn his credit and name from his Administration, than it dissolved of course, and the Cabal was reduced to the same extremities which had before compelled them to give way to the Ministry of Lord Rockingham. But at the period I am describing to you, they found an immediate resource, which reconciled them, in some sort, to the mortifying check they received by the return of that ever-to-be-lamented Nobleman and his friends to office. In the person of Lord Shelburne (a name now consigned, as if by general consent of all parties, to universal oblivion) they found the most fit instrument for their purposes, which their knowledge of the characters of public men had, *at that time*, ever presented to them.

It was not that they could think of admitting this state empiric amongst them as a principal. However ambitious he shewed himself of that distinction, they could not rely on him even in such a cause as theirs. They resolved, therefore, to manage him at his own weapons. They flattered, they amused, and they deceived him. Under an appearance of the fullest confidence they employed him in arranging the new Ministry. They embosomed themselves to him, as far as it was safe, in conversations, which, for once true to his trust, because he had an interest in being true to it, he refused to communicate to those of his intended Colleagues, on the credit of whose popularity the Ministry was ostensibly forming. His conduct proved that they knew their man. In

conjunction with an* associate, equal in zeal with himself, but superior in abilities, and more cordially trusted, their most sanguine expectations were gratified. He proposed measures which he knew would never be adopted. He opposed and thwarted whatever was designed for the public good. He daily gave the most evident and convincing proofs of a secret communication with some power, known to the majority of the Cabinet only, by the dissensions and divisions which he and his associate caused there. He at last drove those of the Ministry, who were obnoxious to his employers, into a determination of resigning, and withdrawing themselves from a situation, in which they must have disgraced themselves, without being able to serve their country.

This determination was only *hastened* by the death of Lord Rockingham. Had it pleased Providence to have spared to his country that great and good man (great chiefly, because he was good) his friends would have had his sanction and concurrence, in separating themselves from Lord Shelburne, as they did on his decease. But unfortunately that event produced this difference, that had he lived to have led the way in the measure, much happier consequences would have resulted from it to the country. By his death the ties were loosened that held the great body of the Whigs together. Before the distinguished characters, who, from the familiarity of their virtues, and their attachment to your interests, have succeeded to his influence, could recover from the fear and dismay into which this stroke of Providence had plunged them, the *weak* were tampered with and seduced; the *sordid*, (for in all great public bodies of men such will be found)

* L——d T——w

were

were bribed and brought over; and the *ambitious*, disappointed in their expectations of succeeding to the place he held among the Whigs, and no longer awed by his discerning, inflexible integrity gladly seized a pretext for retaining that power, the love of which, it is now evident, was the sole cause of the intemperate, and oftentimes indecent zeal, with which they had joined him in opposing the system of Court Influence*.

And here it is well worthy of your attention to observe, that the very men, who in all the struggles that have been maintained against the *system* during the period which I have been describing to you, were for going lengths which its present steady opposers thought too violent, and to which they refused to proceed, are they who now defend the legality, and even the necessity of that *influence* with a frenzy of zeal, which its old supporters scarce can venture to countenance. Nay, those of them, who, in their furious invectives against its abettors, often found a pretext for offering personal indignities to the Sovereign, are now become, not only its avowed and boldest, but even its most *favoured* champions†. So true is it, that in the eyes of the Court conversion to the system, is what conversion to Popery is in the eyes of the Sovereign Pontiff. It procures a plenary indulgence for all past transgressions, and gives a passport to those happy regions where favour and dignities are showered down with a more profuse

* The D—— of R———d retained his place of Master General of the Ordnance, the place he now fills.

† The person here principally alluded to has declared in Parliament, that the measures now pursuing by the Court, were recommended by him. His family and dependents are loaded with places, and the very nature and tenure of an office is changed, that his brother might be gratified by it.

hand on the Repentant, than on the Elect themselves, who never transgressed.

Great as the services were, which Lord Shelburne rendered the Cabal, and timely as was the use which they were enabled to make of his name, they soon consented to sacrifice him. His power was but of a day. There was That in his character, which even They could not trust. Besides, he had brought into power with him a rival for their favour, whom a peculiarity of situation, and a nearer study of his character, on his coming into office, pointed out to them as particularly entitled to their predilection.—It is unnecessary to tell you, that the person I mean was Mr. William Pitt, the present First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

This young gentleman came into life under more favourable circumstances than, perhaps, ever fell to the lot of a public man. A very early expectation had been formed of him by his friends, and the first display of his eloquence in Parliament fully answered that expectation. He began by employing that eloquence in promoting the best interests of his country. He took an active and decided part in the measures for lessening the influence of the Crown in the House of Commons, and was one of those who exerted themselves with the greatest success in spiring the House against the American war.

Having in that important contest confirmed the general idea of his abilities, it remained for him to chuse his road to that height of power which he publicly professed from his place in Parliament, could alone satisfy his ambition—An ambition that disdained all *subordinate* employment;—an ambition, flattered into a persuasion that it possessed that knowledge from nature, which long and toilsome experience alone gives to other men. He was told
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he was born a Statesman: he believed it, and determined in consequence to vault all at once into those high stations, which, before the present times, none could hope to attain but by length of services, and unremitting labour in the public cause.

In the change that immediately succeeded Lord North's resignation, he stood detached from all parties. He lay on his arms as it were, to see the event of the dissensions which the parts that composed that change must, he knew, in a very short time produce. He saw that there were two ways that might lead him to that height of power which he avowed to be his object. One was to embrace the popular Party, the other to devote himself to the Crown. But the popular party had long been led by the greatest talents and abilities that had ever graced this or any other country. The unrivalled powers of Mr. Fox, joined to his well-earned popularity—to the great supports he drew with him among the most independent characters in the kingdom—to the services he had rendered to the people, and the repeated sacrifices he had made of place and emolument to their interests, precluded every hope this young man could have formed of being raised by the people to the first post in their service. Acting, therefore, in the same cause with Mr. Fox, he must ever act a subordinate part; and to a subordinate part he had not scrupled to assert he would ever disdain to descend.

But from the side of the Court the prospect was very different. The Cabal, broken and dispirited, baffled hitherto in all its attempts, plunged almost into despair at the disappointment of its hopes from the American war—left without a leader in the House of Commons, and obliged to consign its interest in the Cabinet to a person*, on whom it was

* Lord S——e.

not possible to place any reliance ;—all this concurrence of favourable circumstances determined him in his choice, and an opportunity soon presented itself for declaring that choice to the public.

The death of Lord Rockingham was instantly followed by the appointment of Lord Shelburne to the Treasury. Mr. Fox and Lord John Cavendish resigned. The Duke of Portland withdrew himself from the Government of Ireland.—Mr. Pitt, triumphing in his foresight, shone out all at once Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Minister of the House of Commons.

An office of such magnitude and importance to the State, requiring such a variety and extent of abilities, such consummate experience, so universal a knowledge of the resources of the country in every branch of commerce and finance, had never before been entrusted but to the most tried, approved, and matured talents. Here it was abandoned to the youth and inexperience of a person, who had scarcely attained the age of manhood. His illustrious father, one of the most successful and able Ministers this nation was ever blessed with, laid the foundation of his own glory, and of that of his country, by learning to bear the yoke in his youth. Great and commanding as his talents appeared from his first entering the House of Commons, he thought an unremitting application of years amply rewarded, when at the age of forty he was made Paymaster General ;—a place that called for no ministerial abilities, that entitled him to no confidence, and which this great man considered merely as a higher school, wherein he might prepare himself for the great offices to which he was afterwards called by his country.

The same might be said of every great character, who in the course of time, has filled these high departments in the State. We may except,
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perhaps, one instance.—Lord Bolingbroke, in times of faction, like the present, when the friends of the House of Hanover were removed from the Administration, and when a private Cabal, despising and setting at defiance the Resolutions of Parliament, and the general sense of the nation, was planning in *the closet* the subversion of the Constitution, by the restoration of the Stuarts; in such a time Lord Bolingbroke was made Secretary of State at the age of twenty-two. But that infatuated Nobleman fell an early victim to the flattery of his sycophants, to his own presumptuous confidence in his abilities; (great, certainly, as Mr. Pitt, or any other man ever possessed) and to his impatient and boundless ambition. The cause of freedom triumphed.—He was driven into exile, and after owing his recal and the restoration of his honours to the mercy of his Prince, and the kindness of Providence, he spent the remainder of his days in obscurity; opposing, in his political publications, the government of his Prince, and, in his philosophical works, blaspheming his God.

The Station, however, which Lord Bolingbroke filled, was a subordinate station compared to that which Mr. Pitt had seized, and with which, however, he was not satisfied. One step more remained for him to ascend, and the increasing favour of the Cabal, and the circumstances of the times shewed it to him at no great distance.

The negotiations for a general peace were pushed forward by Lord Shelburne, with the most impolitic rashness and precipitancy. Notwithstanding our successes in the West Indies during the last campaign of the war; notwithstanding the total and fortunate change that had been effected in the management of our fleets; notwithstanding the increasing distresses of the enemy, and the ruined state of their finances, yet concessions and sacrifices
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were made to them, which nothing but absolute despair should have made us submit to. Whole provinces and islands, were voluntarily proffered to them by the weakness and folly, or given up by the ruinous ignorance of the agents employed by the Minister at Paris. A spirit of shame, indignation and resentment, rose in consequence among all ranks of people, and there appeared a general alacrity and concurrent desire in all parties, to select the Earl of Shelburne, as a victim of atonement to the nation.

The very first to abandon and sacrifice him were, the creatures of the Cabal. He had served their turn, as I have before observed to you, and they had found a much more efficient instrument, to whose ambition they gladly sacrificed him.

We all recollect well the circumstances. So great was their anxiety and eagerness to bring Mr. Pitt forward, on the resignation of Lord Shelburne, that he was himself obliged to restrain their ardour, and to direct their proceedings. For upwards of six weeks the kingdom was kept in a state of the most alarming doubt and anxiety. Public business was totally suspended—the most pressing exigencies of the State were postponed and neglected—an interregnum fatal to every domestic and foreign interest, was suffered to overwhelm us with grief and dejection, until such time as the struggle between the impatience of the secret advisers of the Crown, and the caution and prudence of their new Associate, could be adjusted.

They urged and goaded him to an immediate acceptance of the Ministry, and at one time he had given way to their importunities. But on cooler reflection he retracted his consent, and his wiser plan was adopted. He clearly foresaw the storm that threatened every Minister, who, at such a crisis, should undertake the public Councils. The
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state of our affairs in the East Indies had been recommended from the Throne to the earliest consideration. The boldest Ministers, and they who were most secured in their seats, had shrunk, for years, from an object of such infinite risk and difficulty. Even his illustrious father, in the plenitude of his power, had trembled to look at it. But it was now brought to that point, that at all events and hazards it must be fully entered into and finally adjusted. Weighty taxes were to be imposed on the public to clear off the incumbrances of the war, and no Minister, however popular, could hope to propose them without risking his popularity. These, with many other considerations, equally promising, he urged, as decisive reasons for giving way for the present, and waiting for the favourable opportunity, which such circumstances could not fail of offering to gratify their wishes.

The reluctance with which the Cabal yielded, even to the justness of this reasoning, is not surprising, when you consider the Cabinet which was formed on Mr. Pitt's final determination, not to accept the Treasury. A Cabinet pointed out to them by the House of Commons, and supported by an union of all the great and leading interests there.—A Cabinet formed upon principle, upon mutual confidence, without one suspicious person from whom they could apprehend any seeds of dissention or division, or one to whom the Cabal could venture to intrust their interests, or apply to for support.—A Cabinet composed of men who were chiefly indebted for their power to the popular favour.—United in themselves, trusted and supported abroad.—A Cabinet, in short such as had not been seen since the death of the second George, and which the subverters of the measures of that and the preceding reign could not behold without the utmost abhorrence.

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Their aversion to consent to the formation of this Cabinet could only be equalled by their eagerness to destroy it after it had been formed. Every day's experience confirmed their despair of being able to break it by intestine suspicions or discord, and this despair drove them to embrace the first slight pretext of attack that presented itself to their impatience.

This pretext they took from the proposal of an establishment for the Heir to the Crown. A proposal which had originated from the purest regard for the dignity of the Royal Family, and the wisest maxims of *true substantial* œconomy. But the *policy* of the establishment was never brought into consideration. It bore an *appearance* of unnecessary profusion; and the old arts of falsehood and misrepresentation were practised to spread a general alarm. But the pretext was too slight, and the attempt too precipitate. The prudence of their young favourite again interfered. Concessions, as abject as the provocations had been unjust and insulting, were made to the administration, and matters were suffered to lead on gradually to that period which, if you are wanting to yourselves, must finally establish their power on the subversion and ruin of the Constitution. You already know, that I allude to the business of Mr. Fox's East India Bill, and the extraordinary transactions, which introduced and succeeded its defeat in the House of Lords. But having thus traced the system of private favouritism and Secret Influence, from its first origin, to a period, which it flatters itself, must secure its final success, I shall resume this subject in my next letter.

A FREEHOLDER.

L E T T E R III.

Friends and Countrymen,

BEFORE I proceed to consider the question of Mr. Fox's East India Bill, as affording a pretext to the Cabal for establishing the triumph of that baneful influence, to which the nation, among other misfortunes, is indebted for the present Pre-rogative Ministers, it will be necessary to give you a short account of the grounds on which that Bill rested, and of the necessity that called for it.

The conclusion of the last Treaty of Peace at Paris had renounced every claim of this country over her ancient Colonies in America. That fruitful source of your wealth and power was cut off for ever. Your Plantations in the West Indies could not escape being most materially involved in this revolution at their doors, and which might stop all at once the immediate channel through which they received the supplies the most essential to their existence. Your possessions in the East Indies remained, therefore, the only foreign dependency to which you could look for aid or supply in this eventful calamity.

In those possessions, indeed, you might have well expected to find resources adequate to your greatest exigencies. The English East India Company, either by conquest or treaties with the natives, have there acquired a territory larger than France, England and Ireland, put together. This vast extent of country is inhabited, even in its present depopulated state, by no less than thirty millions of souls, that is to say, by four times the number of persons in this whole island? These in-

habitants are composed of Princes and great Lords, tributaries to the Company, and immediately dependent on it, or of persons possessing their authority and riches under its servants, and for their use; of opulent landholders, enriching the country by tillage; of thousands of ingenious manufacturers, the whole produce of whose labour and industry flows into the Company's warehouses, and supplies them with those expensive articles of luxury, which have so long fed and enriched the commerce of the trading powers of Europe, beyond all the other sources of their opulence.— Yet with all these advantages, and means of enriching the state, the trade of the East India Company hangs like a millstone, upon the public Treasury, and for years has existed only by its bounty.

On a view of the miserable state of your affairs in that country, the House of Commons, so long ago as the year 1781, appointed two Committees to inquire into the causes of the disastrous and ruined condition of that part of the British empire, which there were such just reasons to expect, would be the most opulent and flourishing.

Those Committees were composed of men every way equal to the great purposes for which they were appointed. They were chosen without any regard to the state of parties then existing in the House. Acknowledged integrity, approved abilities, application, and industry, a general knowledge of business, or a particular acquaintance with the affairs of the East India Company, were their only recommendations.

One of these Committees sat for three years in unremitting attention to the object of their appointment; and it would fill volumes, equal in size to their own Reports, to lay before you the result of their inquiries. It will be sufficient to inform you
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that they have proved, from the clearest evidence, that by acts of tyranny and oppression, which make humanity shudder, and which must peculiarly affect and revolt the heart of every honest Englishman, the most fruitful country on the face of the earth, the chosen seat of Plenty and Cultivation, and of every thing that can contribute to domestic happiness, is turned almost throughout into a dreary desert, and a scene of Desolation, Famine, and Despair.

In the provinces that are indirectly dependent on the Company, and under its *protection*, as it is called, the wretched Princes and Chieftains are treated like mere articles of barter and traffic, and their still more wretched subjects only as objects of private plunder. There is not one of those Princes, whom the Company's servants abroad have not repeatedly sold, each in his turn to the other. Not one treaty they ever formed with them, which they have not wantonly broken.—Not one agreement, which they have not infringed: So that the very name of Englishman is held in detestation and abhorrence, and English perfidy is become proverbial all over the East.

In the territories immediately under their own government, and held in their name, those servants proceed, if possible, with still greater cruelty, and more oppressive despotism. The whole landed property of those territories has been arbitrarily seized on and wrested from the Nobility, Gentry, and Freeholders, whose inheritance it was, by one act of general confiscation, without even a pretence of guilt or delinquency, to be sold by public auction to the highest bidder. The ancient proprietors had not even a preference given them in this sale of their own estates.—They must have out-bid every usurer, every jobber, the agent of every English adventurer, who had enriched

riched himself by their plunder; or not being able to accomplish this, must have accepted the alternative either of *renting* their ancient patrimony under their new Lords, or accepting such a pension as those State auctioneers thought proper to assign them.

The same cruel and oppressive spirit exerted itself with equal inhumanity, against the native merchants and traders. These once formed a great and respectable body of men. They had long served as faithful and honest factors to the Company, and supplied it largely with the commodities of the country at the cheapest prices. But, that the monopoly of rapine might be full and complete, no dealer is now suffered to traffic between the Company and the country manufacturer, and those native merchants have been in consequence totally extirpated.

If the plunder of this unhappy and unoffending people contributed in any degree to the national wealth, the gain, though ill gotten, and equally disgraceful to the English character, would still be gain.—But the only part of it that ever makes its way into this country is that which falls to the share of the individuals employed in exacting it.—This can easily be explained to you.

The natural consequence of such unparalleled oppression, of such universal and undistinguishing proscription, as is practised by the East India Company's servants abroad, is to arm the wretched sufferers against their tyrants, and to engage all the native powers around them, in a general league for the common defence. The oppressed Princes and Chieftains are, therefore, in what is called constant rebellion, and the two great States of Mahratta and Mysore which join the Company's possessions, either in revenge of wrongs immediately offered to themselves, or to some of their weaker

weaker allies, and persons claiming their protection, scarcely ever allow them an intermission from bloody and expensive wars.

The portion of the revenues, and of what arises from tributes and extortions, that is suffered to find its way into the Public Treasury, proves totally inadequate to the charges attending so extended and incessant a state of warfare. Hence the Public Revenue is mortgaged to the wealthy individuals among the Company's servants, who often lend it its own spoils to make up its deficiencies.

What happens with respect to the exigencies, thus wantonly created by the Company's treatment of the native powers of India, happens equally in the management of the commercial interests of their masters at home. The funds that are requisite to purchase goods for the European market, and making up the investments of the Company, they are necessitated to borrow, in the same manner as their other supplies, from the official and private gains of their own servants.— These gains are advanced for the purchase of the Company's ships, in bills, at an interest of 8 per cent. and bearing an enormous and consuming discount; and for the payment of those bills, the Company at home is engaged without ever considering whether the sales can bear the payment.— Were it not, therefore, for the remittance of the enormous fortunes amassed by private speculation and rapine, the whole traffic of the East-Indies must have before this been suspended. The plunder of these men is the only medium of traffic now existing there.

The necessary consequence of so ruinous a system, is an accumulation of debt beyond all power of calculation, or even hope of speculation, to discharge from their own funds. Year after year has the

the Company been applying to Parliament for the public money to answer the demands upon them, and adding to the distresses of this exhausted country. At the same time they have been running in debt to the Revenue, till they have withheld the payment of the duties on their imports, to the amount of a million sterling: yet the increase of the revenue, was the great national object, in granting them their monopoly; and every farthing they run in debt to it is so much defrauded from the sinking Fund, that is to say, from the pillar of the public credit.

The Bills now drawn upon them, and for which they have not a shilling to pay, amount to four millions. Not one of those Bills can be accepted without the consent of Parliament, that is without pledging the public credit. And this credit must be pledged; for so connected is the security of all our funds with the interest of the Company, that the ruin of one must be involved in that of the other. You see then into what inextricable difficulties, and into what a load of debt this Company is daily plunging the nation, without any security whatever, or any hope of being able to repay it, instead of contributing to its wealth, and power, as you have such a right to expect it should.

It is totally unnecessary to swell this letter with the authentic documents, from which this statement of the crimes and mismanagement of the Company's servants, and their fatal consequences, have been proved before Parliament. It is sufficient for you to know, that the justice of it is admitted on all sides. They who opposed Mr. Fox's Bill, as well as they who supported it, all agree in giving full credit to the Reports of the Committees, who have brought those enormities into public light. The only persons who are daring enough to controvert the facts they have established, are
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they who are the deepest involved in the guilt, and should be the most exposed to the punishment. I mean the agents and associates of those public delinquents, from whom all the disorders of the Company have originated.

These are the sole authors of all the scurrilous publications which are so industriously spread amongst you, and in disseminating of which, * the person who is the chief agent among them, profusely lavishes the ill-gotten treasures of his master. These are they who disperse their emissaries through every corner of the kingdom to assist the agents of the Court *Cabal*, in promoting the common cause that now connects the indemnity of those rapacious plunderers, in whose pay they are employed, with the continuance of the present Administration in office. So numerous are these agents, and so widely diffused, that their connections, as I have already said, are felt in every part of the kingdom; but where they command their chief influence, and exert it with the greatest success, is here in the capital, the residence of their Directors, and of their Proprietary Court; and to this influence it is that you must entirely ascribe those Addresses and Resolutions which have been handed to you as the sentiments of that respectable body of men, the Merchants and Council of London.

But, however it may suit the present Ministers and their supporters to countenance the artifices of those men without doors, in Parliament they have never yet attempted to call in question the Reports that have been made to the House of Commons, either by the Secret or Select Committee, that is to say, those Reports on the credit of which I have represented these matters to you in the light

* Major S—r, agent to Mr. H—s,

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I have done. However desirous those Ministers show themselves of screening the Eastern plunderers from punishment, they have not ventured to deny that the present system of Indian Government is in the most shameful degree tyrannical and oppressive to the miserable natives, and destructive to ourselves; and that nothing less than a total and fundamental change in its very constitution can hold out the most distant hope of retrieving its affairs, or of preventing the nation from being involved in its ruin.

Parliamentary regulations have been frequently attempted; and there was even a time when these regulations were supported and enforced by the Court of Directors. But they have been openly set at defiance by a combination, as extensive and general, as it is daring and wicked, between the plunderers abroad and the Court of Proprietors at home; and this combination is now strengthened by the members of the Directorship.

You would imagine, from the name, that this Court of Proprietors was composed of men possessing large property in the Company's funds, and consequently deeply interested in the state of its commerce. It is no such thing; by far the greater majority are men placed there by the Governor of Bengal, and other servants of the Company in India, who vest them with a nominal stock, to qualify them for a vote, that they may fight their battles, and screen them from inquiry or punishment. To these are joined a number of young Lawyers, who also purchase a qualifying portion of stock, that they may have a field wherein to exercise their talents, and prepare themselves either for the Bar or the House of Commons. Such are the men who now entirely engross the business of that Court; and such the Court which finally determines on every matter, political or commercial

cial, that regards the Company either at home or abroad.

Knowing, therefore, how this Court is composed, you may easily conclude what their conduct must be, and what little hopes there are of remedying the evils complained of, while the power remains in their hands. You will not now be surprized to hear, that what Parliament reprobates, they support and protect.—That what is condemned by Parliament, they defend and applaud—That the delinquents whom Parliament has ordered home to answer for their misconduct, are instructed by them to remain and enjoy their offices, and to be assured of indemnity. This, in fact, is what they have done, and what they are doing every day, and hence you will conclude, that the power must be taken out of their hands, and vested elsewhere, to effect any salutary or permanent reform.

This was the great object of Mr. Fox's Bill, against which such a clamour has been raised. As I shall at present consider that measure merely as affording a pretext to the Cabal for promoting their own views, I shall postpone the consideration of the several objections that have been made to it, and shall proceed to give an account of its progress, and of the scene to which it gave rise.

As both sides of the House were agreed in the nature and extent of the evil to be remedied, they were equally agreed in the necessity of some legislative provision to remove it, that must be vigorous, substantial, complete, and effective. Mr. Pitt was himself the most earnest to press this idea upon the House. With an eagerness which was then ascribed to candour, but the motives of which are now manifested to have been of a very different complexion, he observed to the then Administration, that a *whole* system must be produced,—that no *half measures*, no *palliatives* would suffice.—

There could be no middle way, he said, in a business where any thing short of going to the *root* and *source* of the abuses would not only be delusive, but dangerous and detrimental in the extreme.— When the Bill was brought into the House, it seemed to be agreed on all sides, that in this essential point it fully answered the ideas of the House. In all the objections urged against it by Opposition, there was not a single argument used against the efficiency, the vigour, or the completeness of the scheme. Collateral objections, that had nothing to do with the business, and which they who urged them directed to other ends, were indeed brought forward without measure; but not a single attempt was made to meet the friends of the Bill on the ground of its adequacy to accomplish the reform at which it aimed. It, therefore, passed the House by as great and decided a majority of your Representatives, as ever gave their sanction to a measure, from which you were to reap the most certain advantages.

In the whole progress of this business it appears, the Ministers then in office had not the least cause to doubt that they had the confidence and countenance of their gracious Master. Conversations must have passed on the subject every day in the closet. Every stage and clause of it must have been explained. The names of the Commissioners to be appointed by the Bill were submitted for the Royal approbation, and the Secretary of State declared in the House from authority, that this approbation had been given. On every occasion, there appeared the most complete acquiescence, without even a distant hint of an objection.

The Cabal, indeed, began early to discover *their* views. On the first reading of the Bill, a Member

ber of the House of Commons, * to whom I have so frequently alluded in these letters, broke the long silence his prudence and caution had imposed on him. He took up the ground of the Bill's affecting the influence of the Crown, and strenuously opposed its being read. He was followed and supported on the same ground by Mr Pitt; but this new *coalition* had the mortification to find, that the standard of the Cabal was then openly erected in vain. Various circumstances had contributed to render your Representatives a very different body from that in which Mr. Jenkinson had been followed by such numbers against the ostensible Minister. He now found himself almost completely deserted, and the votes of † *two men* was all the accession of strength he could bring to his new confederate.

This manifest defeat of the Cabal completed the triumph of the friends of the Bill, and of the Constitution. It was evident from the mortification shown by Mr. Pitt, and the languor with which he afterwards proceeded, that he had been disappointed in the sanguine hopes with which he first began his opposition, and that he had been flattered with assurances of support which the Cabal could no longer command. Every hope of his faction seemed to be blasted for ever, when a new actor appeared upon the stage, and a scene was opened, such as this country has never beheld since the days of the infatuated Stuarts.

Shortly after the success of Mr. Fox's East India Bill had been ascertained in the House of Commons beyond a possibility of danger, the agents of the Cabal were busily employed through every private circle in town to announce its defeat in the

* C——s J——n.

† Sir G——e H——d, and Mr. P——y, Member for Windsor,
House

House of Lords. These rumours were spread without any apparent authority; nor could it be possibly traced from whence they originated. The Ministers found themselves completely warranted to treat them with contempt. They received every hour the most flattering approbation of the Bill itself, and the strongest assurances of support from a great majority of the Lords; and many of the latter, who were the most intimately connected with the Court, were the most forward to pledge themselves. But on the very first day of the Bill's being brought up to the House of Lords, the veil was thrown aside and the plot that had been secretly conducting by the *Cabal* was all at once discovered to the public.

The chief instrument employed on the occasion was a Nobleman just returned from the Government of Ireland. He had established a very early character of overbearing pride, of haughtiness impatient of contradiction or countroul, and of boundless ambition. His conduct in Ireland had fully confirmed this character, and the flattery with which he had been constantly fed during his *Viceroyalty*, by the creatures whom his great fortune had enabled him to hire, and by the extensive connections acquired among the populace of Ireland from his alliance with an ancient family in that country, had swelled his presumption to the most immeasurable height. He considered the Government of this country as waiting for his hand, the hand which alone could manage it successfully, and he manifested the utmost impatience to return to seize it.

This was the rash man who clandestinely made his way into the closet of his Sovereign, and poisoned the Royal Ear with jealousies and suspicions on the effects of a Bill, of which till then no disapprobation had been expressed. No man had
been

been more forward to asperse the system of the present reign; no man had been more zealous in declaiming against the exercise of that Secret Influence, which thwarted in the closet the designs and views of the responsible Minister, than Lord T——e once had been. No man has ever made the daring use of that influence, which his violent and impetuous character has driven him to make.

He had *privately crept* into the closet, but he issued from it in triumph, and holding his head on high. It may hereafter be a fortunate circumstance to his country, that his ambition and his abilities bear no manner of proportion to each other. The latter are exactly on the scale that prevents him from foreseeing the impolicy, or danger of the measures, in which the former rashly involves him. With that precipitancy and hot-headedness, natural to such a character, he had scarce set his foot out of the closet, when to * the First Lord of the Bed-chamber he met, he declared that he had the Royal authority for publishing, that the East India Bill had not his Majesty's approbation, and that he would consider every man to be his enemy who should vote for it.

Of all the attempts that have ever been considered as the most destructive of the spirit of your constitution, and that, which its friends have ever looked upon with the greatest abhorrence, this of publicly making use of the King's name, and declaring his wishes, to influence the fate of any Bill, under the consideration of Parliament, holds the first place.

This was the most fruitful source of all the misfortunes brought on Charles the First, by his own weakness, and by the rashness of his wicked Ministers. It appeared so incredible that any man

* L——d L——th——n,

should dare to renew it in our days, with such publicity, and in such strong and unreserved terms, that the first report of it was considered as one of those rumours which are hourly set on foot by the over officious zealots of the Court. It has since been known that the Minister himself was the last man who could credit the report. There is not a Page about the Court who does not know that the first time of Lord Temple's being in the Closet, the Duke of Portland had just come out of it, and that the second time of that Lord's being there, his Grace succeeded him. Yet he has declared, from his seat in Parliament, that neither previous to Lord Temple's first audience, nor subsequent to his second, was there the least appearance of any change in the royal sentiments, or the least diminution of apparent confidence.

Every day, however, brought new proofs of the credit with which Lord Temple's assertion was received. A nobleman, who has long been known to be in the most intimate secrets of the Cabal, suddenly arrived in town. Private meetings were held at the house of those who were known to be attached to the private views of the Court. Messages and letters were secretly dispersed, from those meetings, to such Lords as were likely to be influenced by a knowledge of the royal pleasure.

These letters were written anonymously, and in mysterious language; but the persons, from whom they came, left no doubt of their authority. They purported, that the East India Bill was extremely disliked in a *certain quarter*: and that no man could be considered as a friend to *that quarter*, who should give his vote for it.

The number of persons to whom these Letters and Messages were delivered; prevented their con-

tents from being kept secret; and Lord Temple himself in the debate, more than avowed them, by the manner in which he answered the questions proposed to him on the subject. The consequence was, that the greater part of the Bench of Bishops, the great Officers of the Household, with one or two exceptions, all the Bed-chamber Lords—Peers, whose letters pledging themselves to the support of the Bill, and approving it in all its parts, the Minister, it is well known, had at that moment in his possession, regardless of their honour, regardless of what they owed to themselves, and to their country, joined the agents of the Cabal, and the bill was thrown out by a considerable majority. Thus was a political measure of the greatest consequence to the state of any that had ever engrossed the attention of its government, a measure replete with wisdom, acknowledged to be fully adequate to the redress of the great evils it aimed at removing, stamped and sanctified by the authority of your branch of the legislature, and openly and fairly submitted to the consideration of the other, defeated by a conspiracy, originally consisting of a few disappointed factious men, and conducting their *plot* by private whispers, by back stair intrigues, by closet negotiations, and all the other dark and secret caballings, by which, in arbitrary and despotic governments, the peace of nations had been destroyed, and the most fatal revolutions suddenly effected.

The dismissal of the Ministry followed in a few days. The same unanimity that had connected them in the Cabinet, marked their departure from it. They were removed to a man; and, it is hard to say, which was considered by the Court as the greater crime in them, that unanimity and union, upon principle, amongst themselves, or the confidence reposed in them by your Representatives,

and their strength in that assembly, where alone your authority, your weight in the Constitution, the existence of your liberties can be defended against the machinations of this now bold and triumphant junto. Certain it is, that on the removal of those Ministers, they were encouraged not only to avow the unconstitutional principle on which their own Administration has been formed, and their unconstitutional manner of stealing into office—not only to trample on the dignity of your Representatives, and to treat their resolutions as if they had already succeeded in dispelling them from all places in the legislature, but even to defend the legality and necessity of that principle in the face of their country; and, what could scarcely be credited, had it not been declared from the Throne, to plead your own approbation and consent in justification of this daring invasion of the most sacred right purchased for you by the blood of your ancestors. I mean the right of controul reserved to your Representatives over the Ministers appointed by the Crown: or, in other words, the right of with-holding your confidence where you think it not deserved, however or by whatever sacrifices that confidence may have been purchased or acquired by any other branch of the legislature.

This right of controul Mr. Pitt has publicly, from his place in Parliament, denied to belong to you. He has asserted that you have no *negative* whatever, directly or indirectly, in the appointment of the King's Ministers; that is to say, he has dared to avow, in the face of a free country, that he has accepted his office on the principles, and on the tenure of every despotic unlimited monarch, and that he is now Prime Minister of England, in the same sense, on the same terms, on the same precise principle and tenure, as the Prime Minister

Minister of France or Spain, or the Vizir of the Turkish Sultan, are the executive servants of their respective masters.

Such a doctrine requires no comment. It demands no length of reasoning to shew it to you in its true light. You feel, as it were instinctively, that if it be once established the Crown has absorbed all power into itself, and all your boasted franchises are gone.

And yet the Minister who has dared to hold this language, prides himself on your support, and pleads your approbation in answer to the collected indignation of your Representatives, excited by his arrogant assumptions and despotic conduct. He has even advised his Sovereign to adopt his principles, and the language which he has used in Parliament, has been re-echoed from the Throne, in answer to the solemn Resolutions and Addresses of the Commons of England.

This is the use that has been made of those Addresses, which many of you have been persuaded to sign; from very different views. When you put your hands to those Addresses, little could you imagine that you were signing your names to the surrender of your own liberties: and that while you were taught to believe you were securing your charters, you were in fact renouncing the only privilege that could render those charters of the least value or consequence in your eyes. This privilege is the privilege of bearing an active and effective share in the Government of your own country, by Representatives of your own nomination; and when the authority of those Representatives is annihilated, and their importance in the State lost and forfeited, that privilege, with all your franchises, is gone. For it is *your* authority that is annihilated; it is *your* importance in the State that

is lost and forfeited; and you become like the members of a French corporation, who retain their charters only, as badges to distinguish them from their fellow slaves.

A FREEHOLDER.

L E T T E R IV.

Friends and Countrymen,

IN my three former Letters, I endeavoured to trace out to you the progress of that fatal system to which every friend of his country, who has been at all engaged in the public service, has, at one time or other, in the course of the present reign, found cause to attribute all our calamities, foreign and domestic. I observed to you, at my first outset, that this would be necessary, in order that you might come fairly and fully prepared to discuss the questions which I engaged myself to prove to you to be the *real questions* now agitating between the Crown and the House of Commons; that is, between the Crown and You.

While I have been prosecuting this design, laudable I hope, in itself, and certainly well meant, the Ministers of the Crown have taken care to give ample proofs of the charges I have brought against them. Every hour within the last three weeks has been marked by some fresh attempt to shake the foundations of the Constitution. What was one day suspicion, the next day became

came certainty; and I might only refer you to their own assertions, and to what is, if possible, still less equivocal—their own conduct—to convince you how fully I was warranted to state those questions to you in the manner in which I stated them in my First Letter. *The Cabal has already triumphed over the House of Commons. The only appeal left for the friends of the Constitution is to You.* If they find you wanting to yourselves, they may lament over your degeneracy, but they must sink under its consequence.

The first question I proposed to you was, “If you were willing that the rules and maxims of arbitrary governments in the appointments of the Ministers of the Crown should be adopted and put in practice in the place of those which have prevailed since the Revolution, and which agree with the spirit of the Constitution as settled at that period?”

In *arbitrary governments*, the will of the Sovereign is the *sole rule* of the subject. To that will the people must pay *implicit obedience* in all cases whatever. The King *makes* the law, and the King provides for the *execution* of it, without the least reference to any power in the State distinct from himself, or without being *obliged* to consult any other inclinations or interests than his own. Hence in the choice of his *Ministers* or executive servants, as well as in every other exercise of Regal power, an arbitrary unlimited monarch need look for no other merit or qualification, but an implicit deference to his pleasure, and a servile acquiescence in all his desires. If the candidates for office have the talents to take advantage of his weakness, to humour his prejudices, to gratify his resentments, to become pliable and ready instruments in accomplishing his designs, and to manage with dexterity the secret intrigues

intrigues of his Court, they require no other recommendation. He rules over *willing slaves*, and he gives them what task-master he pleases. Whether that task-master be a person whom the slaves like or dislike, is a question, the privilege of entering into which they have forfeited. They may *grumble*, but they *must submit*. This is the case with your neighbours in France; it is the case with the people in Spain, and all the other monarchies of the world, if you except your own.

For *you* your ancestors provided a happier lot; to them you owe the peculiar privilege of being bound by no laws but those of your own making: and though, for wise purposes, they decreed, that the execution of those laws should be entrusted to the supreme Magistrate, whom they consented to appoint for that purpose; yet the *spirit* of that privilege requires that the persons by whom this Magistrate exercises that trust, should be such as deserve and enjoy the confidence of the persons whom you have chosen to act for you as a branch of the State. It is a maxim in *your* Constitution, that your King *cannot violate the law*. In framing it he has no greater share than you have; he cannot abolish—he cannot alter, or even suspend it without your consent, *given by your Representatives*—It therefore follows, in the natural course of things, that in the discharge of a trust, which was only given for *your good*, and in providing for the execution of what *could not be established without the consent of your Representatives*, they who come recommended by the approbation and confidence of those Representatives, should be preferred to *private favourites*, to men who have only the liking of their master, or the intrigues, and dangerous policy of his Court

to recommend them; who profess to separate his interest and make them distinct from the interests of your Representatives, and who accept this employment professedly with a view to establish the former on the ruins of the latter.

Whatever speculative men may have dreamt on the subject, the only quarter from which a free people, like you, can dread the destruction of your liberties, is from the powers of the prerogative vested in the Crown, usurping over the privileges of your Representatives. Hence it has been provided, that those powers should always be exercised by the Ministry of persons distinct from the Crown, but of its appointment. For as the King *can do no wrong*, that is to say, as he is not *accountable* for any wrong that is done, the subject would have no remedy, if care was not taken that there should be some intermediate persons who should be answerable to the Representatives of the People for *every act* of the prerogative, *throughout all its branches*. The surest pledge, therefore, that you can have of such an usurpation, as I have alluded to, being never attempted, is to have the powers of the prerogative always managed by men in whom your Representatives can confide, and who are known to them to have no interest distinct from yours.

This was the spirit that prevailed, and these the maxims that were professed and established at several periods of our history, but particularly at the Revolution, and which continued to be cherished and practised without interruption during the subsequent reigns. The executive powers, entrusted to the Sovereign, the discretionary use of which constitutes what is called the *prerogative*, were exercised invariably since that period on popular grounds, and not on a system of Court intrigue;

trigue;—on public principles, and not from the prejudices of private favouritism: in the true spirit of a popular Government, and in the most perfect harmony with that branch of the legislature, in which the popular power resides, and not in the corrupt support of a power distinct from the People.

Confining ourselves, for example, to the two Kings of Brunswick line, there is not a single instance to be found, in the history of their reigns, of an Administration continuing to possess the confidence of the Sovereign, after it had ceased to possess the confidence of your Representatives. Generous and grateful, these Princes well knew the spirit of the people over whom they were chosen to reign, and they revered it.—Wise and just, they knew the tenure on which they were raised to the Throne by the Act of Settlement, and, so far from thinking it a degradation, they placed their glory in complying with the conditions on which they were called to rule over a free people by their free choice. The prerogative reserved to them, of naming their own Ministers, they considered to consist, as well as every other part of their prerogative, in the discretionary power of *acting for the good of their people*; and they concluded, that whenever they exercised that power in opposition to the avowed sense of the Representatives of the People, such exercise, however it might be denied on *legal grounds*, and on the plea of *extreme right*, was an abuse of their prerogative.

What a subversion of these maxims have we lived to see? How different is the spirit of our times! Look to the present Administration—attend to their formation—to their continuance in office—to their doctrines and conduct, and judge for yourselves.

selves. Were they called into office because they were known to possess the confidence of your Representatives? The very reverse. If the confidence of your Representatives was a certain recommendation to the confidence of the Throne, as it invariably had been from the accession to the present reign, would the present Ministers have supplanted the last? The last Ministers possessed that confidence in the most eminent degree, and for that very reason they were removed; and at the very instant when it appeared that they possessed it the highest; and when, from that appearance, they began to give the nation hopes of seeing, at length, a stable and permanent Administration, such as can alone conduct the great and arduous task of Government at a moment like this. But the *Royal Will and Pleasure*, that universal leveller in arbitrary Courts, that sole rule of conduct to an unlimited King, at first conveyed to the agents of the Cabal, in whispers and private closetings, and then daringly published to the great Lords and Officers of the Court, who owe their titles and their dignities, and the emoluments of their places, to the *personal* favour of the Sovereign, without any connection with your particular interest, or any dependence on you, was set in opposition to the favour and confidence, and support of your branch of the Legislature; and, to the triumph of that Opposition, were the last *uncomplying*, and therefore *odious* Ministers, indebted for their dismissal from the Royal Councils; and the *present favourite servants of the Crown*, as they affect to call themselves, for their introduction into office!

Let us next see to what these *favourite servants of the Crown* were indebted for their continuance in office? Was it to the confidence and support of your Representatives? The very reverse. That

confidence followed the distinguished characters whom they had supplanted. All the arts of corruption, all the blandishments, and seducing offers of the Court, all the denunciations of royal vengeance, and even the the threats of dissolution, were not able to weaken that confidence, or to divert or transfer that support. This was avowed in repeated Resolutions, respectfully laid at the foot of the Throne. It was repeatedly declared in Addressess, presented by the whole House to the Sovereign in person. But what was the result? An increase of obstinate and daring resistance on the part of the advisers of the Crown;—a confirmation of their resolution to maintain their places by the same expedients, and on the same grounds as those by which they got possession of them—An avowed determination to fight the battle out between the abettors of arbitrary power and the assertors of the rights of the people, and, as a decision of the contest, to brave the sense of the Commons of England, to set all their censures at defiance, to trample on their dignity, and despise their authority; to show the world that their confidence or their distrust, their concurrence or their opposition, are equally indifferent to the Ministers of the Crown; and that the support of the prerogative alone, exerting its influence over all its own creatures, and in that branch of the legislature, the members of which are of its own appointment, and whose numbers it can increase at pleasure, and whose pride of honours and of distinctions naturally attach them to the source of all distinctions and honours, is the only support necessary for those to whom the King chuses to intrust the government of this country. Such has been the spirit, and such the conduct of the present Administration. Judge then if my statement

of

of the first question proposed to you was not a fair statement, and determine for yourselves.

The second question I proposed to you, as containing the real point at issue between the Crown and you, was, whether you “ were willing to “ relinquish that controul over the King’s Ministers, which is your inherent right, and to release them from the responsibility which they “ owe to your Representatives for all their measures?”

To each of the three branches which compose the Government of this country, are annexed certain distinct and separate privileges. In the free and independent use of these privileges consists that check which each branch possesses over the other, and which forms the superior excellence of the English Constitution. For instance, in the point immediately under our consideration, the King has the exclusive privilege of chusing and electing to all executive offices. The people have a *check*, or *negative*, on this privilege, in a refusal, on the part of their Representatives, to support the persons so chosen and elected, if they cannot confide in them. This check, or negative, or controul, has been invariably exercised, whenever the occasion called for it, and there are three ways in which it has been exercised—By refusing the supplies; by impeachment; or by advising and addressing the King—But from the continuance of the present Administration in office, all these means are shown to be ineffectual; and if the precedent be established and the attempt proved finally successful, there is an end at once to the Constitution. The government of this country stands, from that moment, on principles totally different from those by which we hitherto held the Charters of our Rights.

As to the *Supplies*, such are the circumstances of the times, to withhold them might not only materially affect, but even totally destroy the public credit. The faith of the nation is pledged for the payment of the interest of the national debt; and to refuse the funds, appropriated for the purpose, would be to break that faith. It might not be much less dangerous to withhold the *Supplies* for the ordinary services of the current year. It might lead to general confusion, and dis-arrange the whole system of official government. Of these circumstances Mr. Pitt has availed himself to the worst of purposes. He brought them home to the feelings of the friends of your country, and giving them the choice either of running a risk of plunging the nation into confusion and ruin, or of endangering the Constitution, dared and defied your Representatives to make use of this check and controul, vested in them for the preservation of your liberties.

With equal insolence and triumph, he dared them to exercise the right of *impeachment*. He knew how nugatory the exercise of that right would prove in his case. Your Representatives may *impeach*, but the House of Lords are to be the *Judges*: that is to say, the cause between the Representatives of the People of England, and the corrupt and evil advisers of the Crown, is to be tried by the avowed supporters and abettors of those advisers. Great Justice and ample redress you have to expect from a Court, without the aid and countenance of whose members the party accused never could have been able to commit the offences for which they should be called to its bar! What punishment, think you, would the House of Lords that rejected the Exclusion Bill, in the infamous reign of Charles the Second, after it had passed the House of Commons, with pretty much the
same

same majority that supported Mr. Fox's East-India Bill, have inflicted on the advisers of the Popish succession, if the virtuous Russel, or the patriotic Lord Cavendish, had proceeded to impeach them? This is the only instance I can find in our history applicable to the present question; and it is only by such Ministers as then advised the Crown, and with such a House of Lords as in those profligate unprincipled days, hired themselves out to the arbitrary views of those Ministers, that the right of impeachment for encroachments on the public freedom could have been rendered nugatory.

The expedient of advising and addressing the King only remained, and to this your Representatives had recourse. They were willing to persuade themselves that they should find the same attention paid to their wishes, and the same condescension to their jealousies and fears, which had ever been shown to your Representatives by the Princes of the House of Brunswick. Their temper, their moderation, the calm and deliberate manner in which they conducted this important business, was such as became the great and dignified object they had in view. The Resolutions, which they had inserted in their Journals, expressing their want of confidence in the present Administration, and the ruinous consequences that must result from their remaining in office to the principles of the Constitution, and to the interest of the State, they ordered respectfully to be laid before the Throne. But what was the result? A contemptuous silence of more than a week on the subject, was only broken by a more contemptuous answer. The haughty minister could scarce descend so far from his dignity, as to tell your Representatives that the King "had seen their Resolutions, but that he had not dismissed his Ministers, nor had they resigned."

Not-

Notwithstanding this answer, which stands unparalleled in the English annals, since the days when the unhappy Charles atoned by his death for the arbitrary Counsels of his Ministers and their insulting treatment of his Parliament, no passion, no resentment biased the public deliberations. The Commons, indeed, determined no longer to submit your dignity to the personal petulance of a hot-headed young man. They voted an address of the same import with their Resolutions, and they carried it in a body to the Throne, that they might hear their fate from the mouth of their Sovereign. But with what different impressions must they have returned from the Royal Presence on that day, from those with which they approached it? They found that their gracious Sovereign had been advised to confirm and countenance from the Throne, the designs of the Minister; they heard the cause of that Minister, pleaded there against the censure of the House; they found that to serve his purposes, and to secure him in power, a line of separation was drawn between them, and their Constituents by the supreme Magistrate, and all the weight and consequence vested in them by the Constitution, declared from the highest authority to reside elsewhere; in the loose, partial, and prejudiced addresses of a few corporate towns, Addresses procured, as you very well know, by the influence of the possessors of the several boroughs, assisted by trick, and artifice, and imposition, and which the worst of Ministers have procured in the worst of times. This line of separation, it has been the object and study of the Cabal to draw, since the first broaching of their system; but the public and authoritative sanction of the Crown, to the design was reserved for the counsels of Mr. Pitt.

It

It was not possible for your Representatives not to have recalled to their minds the unhappy days, when such a language and such doctrines were last recommended to be held from that Throne. It was impossible for them not to have recollected, that it was exactly on similar pretences that the Ministers of the stubborn and infatuated Stuarts grounded the contempt with which they treated the Petitions and Addresses of the House of Commons, praying to be relieved from their arbitrary Counsels. Yet they resumed their deliberations with a temper and moderation that could only be equalled by their fixed and firm determination to assert and vindicate your rights against the encroachments, to which they were exposed in those days of despotism. They voted a second Address. They again stood before the Throne, as the guardians of your franchises, and with all the pomp and solemnity with which it is their right, as your Representatives, to approach the supreme Magistrate. But, instead of favour and countenance, they met with indignities that could admit of no aggravation, but from their having been offered to the Commons of England in the Palace of a Prince of the House of Brunswick. They were insulted in the very antichamber of the King, where none but the officers and retainers of the Court could gain admittance; and when they had passed through these insulting placemen, and reached the Throne, their prayer was again rejected with additional contempt. Instead of the grave, dignified, and solemn language, befitting an occasion that is likely to be decisive of your liberties, they found themselves insulted by the pert and petulant cavils of a pedantic school-boy disputing on a point of sophistry. I refer you to the answer itself. It is completely in the spirit of the Minister who framed it; and I need not add, that

that it is completely destructive of your dearest rights. It shows you, that the only weapon left you, for your defence against the encroachments of the prerogative, is proved to be ineffectual; that the interference of your Representatives, in the support of your interests, only exposes them to scorn and contempt; that they have no longer the least power of controul over the Ministers of the Crown, however pernicious they may judge their Councils to be to your freedom, and that those Ministers have ceased to be responsible to them for any measures they may chuse to adopt. To be responsible to another person for our conduct, supposes a power in that person to call us to account, and to correct every abuse of the trust reposed in us. But it is now made appear, that your Representatives have lost that power over the Ministers of the Crown, or at least that they cannot use it without risking the existence of the nation, and pulling down all the pillars on which the general safety rests.

That the Commons of England were jealous and mistrustful of the executive officers employed by the Crown, was ample reason for the removal of those officers even in the most unsettled periods of our constitution. Never, till this day, was it thought necessary to urge any specific charge of criminal or illegal conduct previous to the People's obtaining satisfaction on this head, and having their fears and jealousies quieted. It was charge sufficient that they had not the confidence of the Representatives of the People, and that these Representatives did not think themselves warranted to repose that trust in them, which as guardians of the People's right, they could only place in men who they believed in their hearts and consciences would not use it to the detriment of the People.

In proportion as every monarch respected the freedom and happiness of his subjects, he revered those maxims and paid a gracious and condescending deference to this scrupulous jealousy; a jealousy which he knew was interwoven in the constitution of his government, and originated in the spirit of the nation over which he reigned. So early as the days of Henry the Fourth, the Commons applied to him for the removal of some of his Ministers, in whom they declared they would not confide. What was his answer? "I know
 " of no crimes my Ministers have committed;
 " but it is enough for me that my Commons desire
 " their removal; I will therefore dismiss them my
 " service."

This was spoken in the true spirit of a British King; and if you search every page of the annals of your country, you will not find a single instance of a King's acting from a different spirit, and pushing the exercise of his prerogative in the appointment of his Ministers to the extreme of its right, and in opposition to the Commons, whose reign was not as calamitous to himself as to his People. With what melancholy forebodings, therefore, must not every well-wisher to the public happiness and tranquillity, see the spirit that prevails in our days!

When your Representatives approach their Sovereign, as the Representatives of the People approached Henry the Fourth for the removal of Ministers in whom they could not confide, they are told, "This want of confidence cannot, must
 " not come into competition with the rights of the
 " *Prerogative*. You must bring a *specific charge* on
 " which Ministers can be *legally convicted*, or they
 " shall not be removed." The predecessors of the Tudors and the Stuarts think the *disapprobation* of the Commons of England a sufficient reason in
 I itself

itself for dismissing their servants.—In the reign of a Prince who holds his Crown under the terms of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, the Commons of England are asked “What crimes have Ministers committed*? Your jealousies and your suspicions, and your want of confidence are not reasons with the *Prerogative* for removing them.

How then does the present question stand? The circumstances of the country render it impossible, without hazarding every thing, to withhold the Supplies.—To impeach would be nugatory, and could only tend to increase the triumph of the evil advisers of the Crown, who are chiefly indebted for their power to the support of the Lords.—To advise or address the Throne for the removal of its Ministers, is held to be an unwarrantable interference with the prerogative; and the want of confidence in the popular branch of the Legislature is declared to be no impediment to Ministers in conducting the business of Government.—What security then have you left, that you shall enjoy your freedom for a day? Who are to protect you against the encroaching spirit of despotism? What barrier have you left to oppose it? In what do you differ from the subjects of the most arbitrary monarch in Europe? To what purpose will your representatives continue to assemble together, except to register the arbitrary mandates of the Court—stript and deprived of all means either of controul or advice, to assert their original dignity and importance, or defend your franchises?

* It is curious to see how far this doctrine would be pushed. Should the Commons specify any *charge*, the answer would be, *assertion* is not *proof*; let them be *legally convicted*. Who are to be the judges? The House of Lords! What a mockery!

France had once her Parliament, as free and as independent as yours. France still has her Parliament; but its freedom and independence have long been trampled under foot. She neglected to resist the first encroachments of tyranny, till it burst upon her in an irresistible tide. What is there now called the Parliament, is not even the shadow of what that body once was. It is an assembly of Lawyers, who purchase their places at the discretion of the Crown, and whose only pride is to hold the Courts of Justice, and register the Edicts of the Prince as a necessary form to those Edicts passing into law, but which they have not power to refuse. In some of the provinces, indeed, we still see the shadow of their ancient Parliaments, in what they call their States General; They have the Sovereign in the person of his deputy, as is the case in Ireland; they have the Nobles appearing in person, and they have the Representative of the People, freely chosen by themselves. But what are the privileges of this mockery of Parliament? To receive the commands of the Sovereign from the mouth of his deputy. To be informed of his calls upon the public purse for the service of his Government, and to contribute larger supplies than any other part of the kingdom, because, forsooth, they only grant them with their own consent. Should they withhold them, they are laid under contribution, and the bayonet and the sword show them how far they are free.

It remains for me to consider the fourth question, and, after what has been laid before you, it requires no long discussion.

The propriety of my statement of that question is involved in the reasoning upon the facts that have already been submitted to you. If you are willing that the innovations attempted by the present Ministers of the Cabal should be established into precedent; if you are prepared to support

those Ministers against the House of Commons, and by that means to sacrifice the privileges of your own branch of the legislature to the Prerogative, you doubtless must be prepared to relinquish “ the
 “ active share you have enjoyed through your Re-
 “ presentatives in the legislature of your country,
 “ and to transfer the Government from King,
 “ Lords, and Commons, to King and Lords only.”

But the truth is, you are not left to mere reasoning or speculation on the subject. The Minister and his friends, in this, as well as in every other constitutional question, have thrown aside all disguise.— They have boldly professed their doctrines and they have as boldly attempted to reduce them to practice.

The exclusive management of the public purse is the most important and sacred right reserved to your Representatives.—The moment you allow, that either the Crown or the Lords can interfere in the exercise of this right, so as to controul and render it nugatory, there is not a man, however loose and undetermined his ideas of public freedom may be, who will not admit that the power of the Commons is at an end. Yet this the present House of Lords have attempted to do, and for this attempt, among others, you have been called upon to express your reliance on that House for the preservation of your rights.

The East India Company had applied to the Commons for a very capital sum, to answer bills drawn upon them from abroad. At the very time of their making this application, they were before Parliament convicted of the highest delinquency. The most incontrovertible proofs had been produced of their being on the verge of Bankruptcy, and, without the most vigorous interference of the legislature, no prospect could appear of any security for the enormous sums already advanced to them from the Treasury. At the head of this Treasury,

Treasury, and vested with the discretionary management thereof, had been just placed a set of Commissioners, who had made common cause with those delinquents, and who had openly undertaken their exculpation and defence. I ask you, if under those circumstances, your Representatives would not have been traitors to their own conviction, and to the duty they owe to you, whose money was thus to be disposed of, if they had not interfered as they did with the authority you had delegated to them, and ordered that no sums should be advanced for such purposes, without the consent of the House of Commons? But what was the conduct of those new defenders of the People's rights?—their *hereditary Representatives*, on this occasion? One of their members, and he too professing himself a whig to the very extreme of whiggism, and once supposed to have fallen a martyr to his popular zeal, procured a vote of censure on the Commons for this interference. He did not stop even there. He made the censure general, and declared all similar interference an *usurpation* on the part of the Commons, and an undue and unwarranted exercise of their powers. Your Representatives, indeed, took care as far as depended on them, to vindicate your cause on this most essential point. One of the great designs of the Cabal in procuring this censure, was to breed a quarrel between the two Houses, and thereby have some plausible pretext for dissolving Parliament. But the House of Commons avoided the snare.—They avoided all retort upon the other branch of the legislature.—They were content to prove by numberless precedents, extracted from their own Journals, that they had only exercised a right invariably resorted to by the Commons on all similar occasions, and to these precedents they added a Resolution of their own, assert-

asserting the privilege for themselves and their successors, of exercising that right without limit or controul. But whether that Resolution is to remain a dead letter, unoperative and ineffectual, like all other votes and Resolutions of your Representatives in the present struggle, is a question that must finally be determined by you.

Of similar tendency to this vote of the House of Lords, was the doctrine advanced by the Minister and his friends in the House of Commons respecting the Mutiny Bill. Among the several constitutional expedients to which your Representatives could have recourse for the purpose of removing an administration in whom they could not confide, mention had been made of passing a short Mutiny Bill. This had been done but the very year before for the express purpose of procuring the removal of the then Ministers from his Majesty's Councils. There was not a man, even so late as that period, who dared deny the rights of the Commons to adopt such a measure, much less to threaten your Representatives with the conduct of the other House, on a supposition that they should adopt it. Things were not then ripe for bringing the great question between you and the Crown to a final decision. At present your supposed approbation encouraged the Cabal to conclude, that the time is now come, and they avail themselves of it. Without the least reserve or palliation, their Minister gave the House to understand, that if they should shorten the period of the Mutiny Bill, the House of Lords would alter it to the wishes of the Administration, and he left it to them to reflect on the consequences. You need not be told that the Mutiny Bill is a *Money Bill*. That it includes in its object the pay and regulation of the army: in other words,

words, that it is a Bill that affects the very vitals of your freedom.

With these doctrines declared and established, and reduced to practice, can any of you entertain a doubt of the resolution that is formed by the present Cabal Ministers to shew the world that the government of the country can be conducted in opposition to the Commons of England; that the Crown and the House of Lords, or to speak more properly, the Crown in the House of Lords, possesses ample powers for establishing every act of policy and revenue, and that the consent of your branch of the legislature is only a matter of form, which by tampering with the corrupt and venal, imposing on the credulous and weak, defaming, oppressing, and tiring out the independent Members, they are sure to obtain, until at length the practice is fully established, and this consent, by degrees, becomes a matter of course.

Where then, let me ask you, are you to look for your security? Can it be possible so far to impose upon your understandings, as to make you think that by sacrificing your Representatives to the Lords, you are protecting your own rights? Is it in infatuation itself to suppose that you have less to expect from men who owe all their consequence and power to you; who have the same interest with you; who indeed, are part of yourselves, and in a political light, are no otherwise distinguished from you but by your own free choice, than from persons totally unconnected with you, appointed by another power, and looking for all their authority and consequence to another quarter?

In all contests between you and the arbitrary encroachments of the Crown, to what side will those Lords, who now are said to be your only protectors,

protectors, lean? To whom do they owe their titles and dignities? From whom do they expect the means of supporting those titles and dignities, when by misfortunes or extravagance they consume their patrimonies? Who can encrease their numbers to any extent that may be necessary for opposing those amongst them who prefer personal honour and integrity, the pride of hereditary virtue, and the interest and freedom of their native country to the smiles of evil Ministers, or the favour of an ambitious usurping Prince.

With such Ministers we are actually visited. A day may come when we may be scourged by such a Prince. Your Representatives are deprived of all the powers hitherto enjoyed by them of protecting you from their designs. This is declared to be done with your own approbation; and your Addresses are pleaded in justification of the Minister who first dared to execute the bold project of depriving you of those powers. It is time therefore, to come forth in your own defence. It is time to convince the world that you have been defamed and traduced by the creatures of Administration, who would brand you, in the eyes of mankind, as the most contemptible of human beings, and the base betrayers of your own rights; as a depraved, degenerate, unnatural race of men, who, in the actual, full, and acknowledged possession of the rights and privileges which your ancestors thought to be cheaply purchased and secured for you with their blood, make a *voluntary* surrender of them into the hands of that power from which they fought to protect you, and who thank and applaud the Minister, who, at the age of twenty-five, had dared to make himself the instrument in the point of enslaving you.

A FREEHOLDER.

F I N I S.

